

Site-Wide EIS

Employee Information Quarterly

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Information for employees about the U.S. Department of Energy's Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for LANL

GLOSSARY

DOE
Department of Energy

GRAM, Inc.
the contractor hired by DOE to perform the analysis of impacts and prepare the site-wide EIS.

NEPA
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the basic U.S. law for protecting the environment

ROD
Record of Decision, a concise public document issued after the completion of a site-wide EIS stating the DOE's decision on the proposed action evaluated in the document.

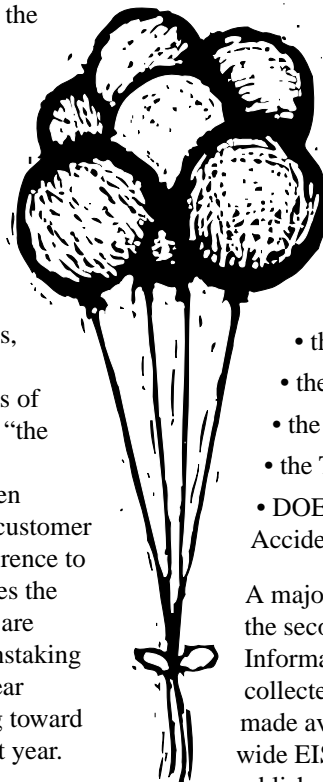
Tiering
using an established baseline from a previous EIS (usually a broadly-based study such as a programmatic or site-wide approach) as a foundation for additional NEPA analyses.

SWEIS Project Office Marks 2nd Year Accomplishments

If the second year of the development of the site-wide environmental impact statement (SWEIS) for Los Alamos had a theme, it was "create and adjust." As this complex process evolved throughout the year, the LANL SWEIS Project Office team took on additional responsibilities as assigned by the Department of Energy (DOE), coordinating and managing the LANL efforts on the development of alternatives, key parameters, and data collection. In a letter of commendation, Richard E. Glass of the Albuquerque Office of the DOE said "the LANL SWEIS Project Office has been a proactive player [whose] efforts have been characterized by technical competence, customer focus, attention to cost control, and adherence to schedules." The Project Office appreciates the many people across the Laboratory who are participating in this challenging and painstaking project. We are proud of these second-year accomplishments, and anticipate moving toward closure of the SWEIS process in the next year.

In addition to maintaining a single point of contact within the Laboratory for the DOE and its contractor to support the SWEIS process, providing baseline data about the Laboratory, and reviewing drafts of the SWEIS, in this second year the Project Office was assigned a wide variety of responsibilities by the DOE:

- Preparing specific reviews for projects receiving complete NEPA coverage in the SWEIS (currently only three projects)
- Developing Waste Management Strategies and Alternatives for Waste Management Facilities
- Running rad air modeling and providing results to GRAM
- Developing alternatives for thirteen key facilities/operations, completed April 1996
- Facilitating meetings of DOE, GRAM, & LANL to focus on the development of methodology and defining appropriate key environmental impact parameters, completed May 1996 (LANL's role was to provide technical expertise on the existing data & identifying important issues)



- Developing a description of non-key facilities/operations
- Gathering and developing data for the subsequent analysis of impacts of the alternatives by DOE's contractor, completed September 1996.
- Preparing a source document for Maintenance & Refurbishment

Project Office initiatives included:

- the Project Control System
- the Data Request System
- the Baseline Information Document
- the TA/Facilities Document
- DOE/GRAM Support Teams, such as the Accident Support Team initiated in August.

A major initiative of the Project Office begun in the second year is the development of a Baseline Information Document compiling the information collected and developed by the Laboratory and made available to DOE's contractor for the site-wide EIS. This information document will be published and available to the public, and in effect will be a supplement to the site-wide EIS. It will provide information that might be available only in summary fashion in the site-wide EIS itself. The Project Office is currently developing concepts for the maintenance and updating of the information.

Inside

Anatomy of a SWEIS

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Site-Wide EIS: Who Does What?

DOE evaluates the site-wide EIS and issues a Record of Decision

Public Stakeholders help define the scope of the site-wide EIS and review drafts

GRAM, Inc. consulting firm hired by DOE to perform the analysis of the impacts and to prepare the actual document

LANL Site-Wide EIS Project Office supplies baseline data inventory to DOE/AL and GRAM, Inc.

Help Us Help You

The Site-Wide EIS Project Office is coordinating this enormous information gathering effort for the Laboratory. The Project Office serves as a single point-of-contact for DOE/AL and the GRAM team in the work with all Laboratory divisions. All requests for information from DOE/AL and the GRAM team should be cleared through the Project Office at 665-8969.

COVER SHEET including:

- Title of the action
- Its location
- EIS designation (i.e., Final, Draft, Supplement)
- Responsible federal agency and cooperating agencies
- Agency point of contact, with name, address and phone number
- Date that comments are due

SUMMARY (less than 15 pages)

- EIS summary, using the EIS format
- Conclusion
- Areas of controversy
- Issues to be resolved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Including all headings and subheadings
- List of figures
- List of tables
- List of abbreviations
- List of scientific or Greek symbols used

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

- Need or requirement
- Purpose or objective

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

- Description of each alternative, including the "no-action" alternative
- Alternatives not rigorously explored and reasons
- Environmental consequences of alternatives in a comparative form
- Preferred alternative
- Mitigation measures

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

- Description of affected environment
- Necessary description relevant to impacts
- Summary, consolidation, or referencing of information to minimize bulk

LIST OF PREPARERS

- Names and qualifications
- Reference to preparers of sections where possible

DISTRIBUTION LIST

- Identification of agencies from which official comment is requested
- Identification of officials and organizations from whom comment is solicited
- Those who requested of the EIS may be listed, although identification of citizens not necessary
- Locations of public access copies

APPENDIX

- Material prepared in support of EIS
- Analysis to support effects
- Analytic computations relevant to the decision

INDEX

- At a minimum, index of environmental topics

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED

- Direct effects, significance
- Indirect effects, significance
- Possible conflicts with other federal, state, local, or Native American tribe plans
- Energy requirements and conservation potential
- Natural or depletable resource requirements and conservation potential
- Long-term consequences, impacts on productivity
- Any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources
- Urban quality, historic and cultural resources, and the design of the built environment
- Mitigation measures not covered under "Alternatives" section

ANATOMY OF THE EIS

What Should the EIS Contain?

According to federal regulations, an
Environmental Impact Statement should contain:

A Site-Wide EIS Is:

- part of the decision-making and planning process used by federal agencies as outlined by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts of on-going activities and reasonably foreseeable future actions at a specific site
- information for the public and decision-makers about possible environmental impacts at a specific site, and reasonable alternatives which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment
- a process to insure that the policies and goals defined in the National Environmental Policy Act are infused into the ongoing programs and actions of the Federal Government

WHAT A SITE-WIDE EIS IS AND IS NOT

The sweeping nature of a site-wide environmental impact statement at an operating facility as complex as LANL—combined with the public's involvement in the process—may create some mistaken assumptions about its actual purpose. The site-wide approach to the EIS process was developed by the Department of Energy specifically for large, multi-faceted DOE sites such as LANL to identify and assess the individual and cumulative environmental impacts of on-going and reasonably foreseeable future actions at the site, and to provide that information to the public.

In a project-specific EIS, the environmental impacts of a proposed new project are evaluated so that they can be considered in a decision to pursue or cancel the project. In contrast, a site-wide EIS assesses the environmental impacts of the on-going activities at a site, as well as possible future actions and alternatives; that is, the "proposed actions" are different levels or types of operations at the site, not the creation or closure of the site itself, nor massive redirection in the site's mission. A site-wide EIS furthers the purposes of NEPA by providing an overall NEPA baseline for a site. It can be particularly useful for tiering or as a reference when preparing project-specific NEPA documents for new proposals at the site.

A Site-Wide EIS Is Not:

- A vote
- A decision by the public
- A referendum
- A requirement to choose the least environmentally disruptive alternative
- A cost-benefit analysis
- A popularity contest
- A determination of national policy

Current Time Line

This time line shows the most current schedule for completion of the SWEIS. The original schedule has been revised, and is subject to further changes as the site-wide EIS process evolves.

1994
Advance Notice of Intent

1995
Notice of Intent
May
Public Scoping
June

Implementation Plan
November

1996
Alternatives Development
Data Collection &
Development
Environmental Analysis

1997
Draft SWEIS
February
Public Comment Period
March
Final SWEIS
September
Record of Decision
October

How To Find Us

The Site-Wide EIS Project Office, headed by Doris Garvey, is part of the ESH Division and located in TA-O, Building-1324 in the Small Business Center annex at Eastgate Industrial Park.

Phone: 665-8969
FAX: 665-8970
Mail Stop: M889

For More Information

Hotline

Call the LANL Site-Wide EIS Hotline
1-800-898-6623

Reading Room

The LANL Outreach Center and Reading Room has a special section devoted to documents relevant to the SWEIS, including written transcripts from the public scoping meetings and the Notice of Intent.
1350 Central Avenue
Suite 101
Los Alamos

Phone:
665-2127 or
1-800-543-2342

What Is a Record of Decision?

In the procedure outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), after the environmental impact statement is completed, the federal agency conducting the EIS—in this case, the DOE—issues a public “Record of Decision” or a ROD. This record contains a concise statement of the government’s decision, identifies all alternatives that the government considered, specifies the alternative or alternatives considered to be preferable, and states plans to mitigate any negative environmental effects of the selected alternative. Generally, RODs are issued within several months after the final EIS is available to the public.

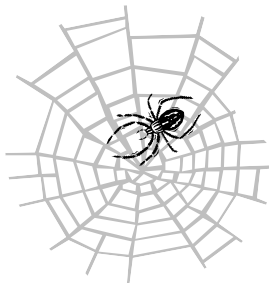


In the Record of Decision, the federal agency may discuss factors which were balanced by the agency in making its decision, such as economic or technical considerations, agency statutory missions, or national policy. In addition, the Record of Decision should state whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted, and if not, why they were not. The Record of Decision must identify the mitigation measures and monitoring and enforcement programs that have been selected and plainly indicate that they are adopted as part of the agency’s decision.

The terms of a Record of Decision are enforceable by agencies and private parties, and can be used to compel compliance with or execution of the mitigation measures identified in it.

WE’RE ON THE WEB!

Thanks to Allen McKinnon at the Library Without Walls, you can access this newsletter and all past issues on the Laboratory’s Home Page. Go into the Library, to Los Alamos Publications, under Environmental Technology. Find Site-Wide Environmental Impact Study, and look for the Employee Information Quarterly.



UPDATE

In the last issue’s article “Demystifying the Greener Alternative,” the remarks in the last paragraph were mistakenly attributed to Corey Cruz. Those remarks were actually prepared by members of various community groups who participated in the community workshop on the subject.

